



## **IFES Quarterly Report: January 1 – March 31, 2005**

**Supporting Elections in Afghanistan**  
**USAID Associate Cooperative Agreement No. DFD-A-00-03-00033-00 under**  
**Leader Cooperative Agreement No. DGC-A-00-01-00004-00**

**Project Period: March 1, 2003 to August 31, 2005**  
**Total Budget: \$6,660,000 Expenses Recorded to Date: \$4,318,732**

### **RESULTS**

- IFES civic education field staff completed its pre-parliamentary election phase with an additional 8,757 majalis attended by 190,062 men and 113,144 women.
- Total attendance during this phase (October 25, 2004 to March 31, 2005) was 512,949 voters (326,179 men and 186,770 women) in 14,823 majalis.
- The newly appointed Independent Electoral Commission benefited from IFES' capacity building through the training conducted by IFES international election experts.
- IT forms an important element in the work of any successful and efficient election administration and IFES continued to train the IEC members in various computer applications.
- IFES' Senior Election Administration Specialist enhanced the JEMB Secretariat's capacity to properly plan the forthcoming elections by taking a prominent role in developing the JEMB's principle operational concept, as well as the election authority's candidate nomination process.

### **BACKGROUND**

The objective of IFES' Supporting Elections in Afghanistan (SEA) project is:

*Support for fair and participatory 2004 and 2005 national elections by providing targeted assistance in strategic planning and organizational support to the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the pending national electoral body.*

IFES has proposed to meet this goal through:

- a) Increasing citizen knowledge about, and participation in, the political process – particularly for women and ethnic minorities.
- b) Supporting the development of a credible electoral administration.

## **ACTIVITIES THIS QUARTER**

In this quarter, IFES continued its USAID-funded presence in Afghanistan. Program activities focused on:

- Civic/voter education
- Building the capacity of the Independent Election Commission (IEC)
- Building the knowledge base of election stakeholders
- Strengthening the electoral planning and implementation process

### **I. Civic Education Program**

IFES' 67 trainers and 12 coordinators were responsible for conducting 12,631 majalis during this quarter. They covered six provinces and the municipality of Kabul where they held sessions in 25 ministries and other organizations such as the high court and central bank. They met with a total of 320,000 voters.

IFES continues to work in Kabul City and the provinces where we operated for the presidential election. The remaining provinces will be covered by IFES' partners in the original civic education consortium—ACSF and UN. IFES is coordinating efforts with these organizations for the start of their voter education campaigns. For example, IFES, UN and ACSF will likely share CE/VE materials.

Since the beginning of the pre-parliamentary phase last October 25<sup>th</sup>, 14,823 majalis were conducted with a total of 512,949 citizens. Afghan citizens have not received information from any other sources with regard to their parliament, its composition and powers and how it fits into the overall structure of the Afghanistan government under the new constitution.

In order to carry out this pre-parliamentary work, IFES developed an eight page flipchart and brochure to use in its majalis. We also prepared a pamphlet on the cabinet upon its appointment in January and a second handout on the newly appointed nine-member Independent Electoral Commission. Except for reportage in Kabul newspapers, nothing on these appointments circulated in the provinces until IFES prepared these items and distributed them during the majalis in our six provinces.

During this quarter, our majalis were aired on radio and television. Radio Paghman and Radio – Television Afghanistan as well as Parwan television either broadcast portions of our sessions or reported on them during their news broadcasts. Kabul newspapers—Kabul Weekly, Kabul Times, Anees, and the Hewad Daily—reported our activities, sometimes with journalists accompanying our trainers to their majalis.

IFES civic educators have reached a wide variety of special groups during this period. They included deaf, blind, handicapped, and Hindus. It has been noted by them that no one reached them last year during the registration process so IFES plans to make a special effort to do so prior to the new registration period now planned to begin in late June. Under the division of

labor reached last year in the civic education consortium, the UN was expected to visit these groups.

In January IFES held a joint training session with NDI who engaged Professor Andrew Reynolds to explain the SNTV election system compared with the Proportional Representation List system. In February we began contacting the UN Public Outreach unit to learn what information was being contemplated for the parliamentary election. In March we met with Altai Consulting who was engaged by Asia Foundation to conduct focus groups in preparation for the parliamentary election.

## **II. IEC Capacity Building**

IFES continued its capacity building efforts with the Independent Electoral Commission during the reporting period. IFES training specialists used materials from IFES' Basic Election Administration Training (BEAT) course, and from the BRIDGE course developed by the Australian Election Commission (AEC).

In addition to presentations by IFES Sr. Election Specialist Staffan Darnolf, James Heilman and Paul Anderson held formal sessions and provided additional counsel.

Sessions held with the commissioners in this quarter included the following:

(1) **Comparative electoral systems.** This session covered the method of allocating Wolesi Jirga (lower house) seats to the provinces and the method of awarding seats to electoral winners under the closed list proportional representation system and under the single non-transferable vote (SNTV) system. (At the time this session was held, it remained unclear which electoral system would be used.)

(2) **Awarding Wolesi Jirga seats to women.** Two sessions were held on this issue since it is the JEMB who must decide the formula and procedure. By the time these sessions were held, it appeared that the SNTV system would be used – a system that could make the allocation of seats to women more problematic and politically charged. As part of this training several allocation formula options were developed and presented.

(3) **Absentee voting.** Two sessions were held on this topic – one to explain different types of absentee voting and the different target groups, and the other to explore in more detail the problems and issues involved with providing voting opportunities to refugees in Iran, Pakistan and other countries. (The IEC had been tasked by the Council of Ministers with making recommendations on the refugee voting issue.) Cost issues were also presented and discussed.

(4) **Voter registration.** This session covered the principles involved in voter registration systems, the different types of systems, and specific issues in the Afghan context. Various options for a voter registration exercise this spring/summer were presented and discussed. The issue of voter registries and lists – and their practical value for the upcoming election – were also presented and discussed.

(5) **Election management structures.** This session explored different types of election management bodies that exist in the world as well as the issues of autonomy, control, and chains of command that will be crucial in the further development of the IEC, particularly once the international community recedes from the electoral picture.

(6) **Civic education.** For this session, two of IFES' civic education trainers and the Kabul province coordinator conducted a "majlis" or seminar for the commissioners, in order to familiarize them with the work currently conducted in the field.

(7) **Principles of election administration.** While we were unable to commit any one session wholly to this BEAT module, we were able to tag elements of it on to other sessions and to discuss the papers written by Joe Baxter and Robert Pastor on the subject.

(8) **Further options for refugee voting.** In this session we covered options such as elected and non-elected commissions and advisory bodies that would sit outside a parliament but would provide policy advice.

(9) **Establishment of priorities.** A session was held to establish training priorities of remaining BEAT sessions plus sessions suggested by IEC commissioners. This was a very constructive session and included not only prioritizing but also discussing the format and composition of some sessions.

### **III. Election Planning Activities**

Upon request of the JEMBS Chief Electoral Officer, Staffan Darnolf performed the duties of Senior Planning Advisor. The main tasks fulfilled during this quarter were:

- Taking a leading role in developing the election operational concept plan for presentation to key national and international stakeholders
- Developing the candidate nomination concept for the forthcoming parliamentary elections
- Developing the Election Complaints Commission concept in close collaboration with the JEMBS Legal Department

### **IFES Team in Afghanistan**

Ed Morgan, project management and civic education expert, is IFES' program manager in Afghanistan. He serves as chief coordinator for IFES field office activities, and has been and will continue to be IFES' primary point of contact for the Afghan authorities, the USAID mission in Kabul, and other project stakeholders. IFES Specialists in Afghanistan (January 1, 2005 – March 31, 2005)

Staffan Darnolf	Nov. 2003 – present
Jim Heilman	February 3 – March 6, 2005
Paul Anderson	March 10 – May 5, 2005

Sr. Election Administration Specialist
Electoral Training Specialist
Electoral Training Specialist